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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 3 October 2005, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Butagira ..... (Uganda)

Contents

Agenda item 61: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*)*

Agenda item 62: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation due to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*)*

Agenda item 63: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*)*

* Items which the Committee has decided to consider together.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 61: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/60/80 and A/60/111)

Agenda item 62: Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/60/61-E/2005/7, A/60/117, A/60/128, A/60/133 and Corr.1, A/60/138, A/60/155, A/60/156, A/60/290 and A/60/377-E/2005/92)

Agenda item 63: Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/60/151 and A/60/377-E/2005/92)

1. **Mr. Ocampo** (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the recent world summit had acknowledged the interrelated nature of the world's social, economic, environmental and political threats and challenges, as well as the need to address their root causes with resolve and determination. That interrelatedness explained the enduring importance of the series of major United Nations conferences and summits which had been held during the past 15 years and through which Governments and development partners had constructed a United Nations development agenda: a comprehensive set of internationally agreed development goals on the economic, social and environmental aspects of development.

2. The Millennium Development Goals were a prominent expression of that agenda, and the decisions of the Committee would play a crucial role in efforts to maximize the impact of the decisions taken at the various conferences and summits. An integrated response to the interrelated problems of social development, gender equality and human rights had increased the chances for the world's poorest and most vulnerable people to join the ranks of those who enjoyed greater opportunities.

3. The question of the global rise in inequality should pervade all aspects of the work of the United Nations, as it offered a vivid reminder of the urgency of concrete action across the entire development agenda. Although it had bypassed several developing regions, especially sub-Saharan Africa, the global decline in absolute poverty represented a significant achievement. Access to education for girls was showing improvements, and it had become apparent that there was a strong correlation between social spending on health and higher levels of life expectancy. However, those advances were being eclipsed by the increasing inequality between and within countries, as outlined in the recent report on the World Social Situation 2005, contained in document A/60/117.

4. Weak employment generation had brought an increase in informal employment, and the widening gaps between skilled and unskilled workers — and between the formal and informal economies — had contributed to persistent and deepening inequality worldwide. Poverty and inequality were being transmitted from one generation to the next, with the result that large segments of the world's population were excluded from opportunities to improve their lives.

5. Because the global rise in inequality had accompanied the economic reforms of the past two decades, it was hard not to conclude that the two were related, at least in part. In many cases, reforms had not yielded the expected benefits but instead, had resulted in rising unemployment, growing income gaps, and inadequate social protection. Those increasing inequalities had slowed economic growth and contributed to higher rates of violent crime. They also included a gender dimension, which was often reflected in the denial of human rights and the practice of discrimination.

6. The situation required a broad approach which targeted hunger and inadequate income while simultaneously waging a much wider war against inequalities in access to health, education and personal security, as well as in opportunities for employment and political participation. The 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen had helped to place that approach on the United Nations development agenda, while the resulting Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action had sought primarily to make development more people-centred and to integrate the various objectives of economic and social policies.

7. In commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Copenhagen Summit, earlier in 2005, the Commission for Social Development had stressed the need to realign current efforts with that fundamental approach.

Furthermore, the World Summit had made a firm commitment to make full and productive employment and decent work for all a central objective of national and international policies and development strategies. Similarly, the recent 10-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Programme for Action had stressed women's lack of access to secure employment, decent work, and appropriate, affordable, and quality health care, and had reaffirmed that gender equality was key to advancing development.

8. Providing opportunities for all social groups to contribute to society remained one of the cornerstones of social integration and socially inclusive development. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing provided the framework for national and international efforts in that regard. The emphasis was now on supporting capacity-building and the mainstreaming of ageing into policy formulations. The sixtieth session of the General Assembly would also mark the tenth anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth, which represented the first global blueprint for effective national action for and with young people. The World Summit had also recognized that the sustainable development of indigenous peoples and their communities was critical to the fight against poverty and hunger and for social inclusion. In that regard, the Summit had produced an agreement to present for adoption, as soon as possible, a final draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.

9. The power of the United Nations development agenda lay in its comprehensiveness and its integrated approach, but that power had yet to be fully unleashed. It was time to demand that priority should be given to more effective social investment efforts in all national development strategies. At the same time, more decisive action should be taken to achieve the eighth goal of the Millennium Declaration: developing a global partnership for development, especially in the key areas of aid, debt relief and trade. It would also be necessary to build stronger institutions to support the development of integrated policy frameworks. Those institutions should serve to encourage social actors to speak for the disenfranchised, make the social effects of economic policy highly visible, and effectively mainstream social objectives into economic policymaking.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.